LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A thermal processing apparatus [[heating]] that heats a substrate by irradiating said substrate with light, comprising:

a chamber for storing and holding said substrate, [[comprising]] and including a chamber window ~~transmitting~~ that allows the passage of light into the chamber ~~on its upper portion, for storing and holding said substrate therein~~;

a lamp house[[,]] storing a lamp and comprising an irradiation window passing light emitted from said lamp therethrough ~~on its lower portion~~, the lamp house being fitted to said chamber in an openable/closable manner; [[and]]

a locking mechanism that enables fixing said chamber and said lamp house to a closed state in which ~~for opposing~~ said chamber window and said irradiation window [[to]] oppose each other[[,]] ; and

~~for shielding said irradiation window by inserting~~ a shielding plate insertable into the lamp house to shield said chamber window and to enable ~~in said closed state thereby releasing~~ said locking mechanism ~~and allowing~~ to be operated to allow opening of said chamber and said lamp house.

2. (Original) The thermal processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said shielding plate is opaque with respect to said light emitted from said lamp.

3. (Original) The thermal processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said lamp is a xenon flash lamp.

4. (Currently Amended) A thermal processing apparatus [[heating]] that heats a substrate by irradiating said substrate with light, comprising:

a chamber for storing and holding said substrate, [[comprising]] and including a chamber window ~~transmitting~~ that allows the passage of light into the chamber ~~on its upper portion, for storing and holding said substrate therein~~;

a lamp house[[,]] storing a lamp and comprising an irradiation window passing light emitted from said lamp therethrough ~~on its lower portion~~, the lamp house being fitted to said chamber in an openable/closable manner; [[and]]

a locking mechanism that enables fixing said chamber and said lamp house to a closed state in which ~~for opposing~~ said chamber window and said irradiation window [[to]] oppose each other[[,]] ; and

~~for covering said locking mechanism with~~ a shielding plate that is capable of blocking access to said locking mechanism and capable of being drawn out in said closed state while shielding said irradiation window by inserting said shielding plate into said lamp housing thereby allowing release of said locking mechanism and enabling opening of said chamber and said lamp house.

5. (Original) The thermal processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said shielding plate is opaque with respect to said light emitted from said lamp.

6. (Original) The thermal processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said lamp is a xenon flash lamp.

7. (New) The thermal processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the locking mechanism comprises screws.

8. (New) The thermal processing apparatus according to claim 1, including a hinge mechanism by which the chamber and the lamp house are mechanically coupled to one another.

9. (New) The thermal processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the locking mechanism comprises screws.

10. (New) The thermal processing apparatus according to claim 4, including a hinge mechanism by which the chamber and the lamp house are mechanically coupled to one another.